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MSPB RELEASES REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) has released *Sexual Harassment in Federal Workplaces: Understanding and Addressing the Problem*. This represents MSPB's fourth report on the topic, following earlier publications in 1981, 1988, and 1995. Initial findings of this research were shared in a March 2018 Research Brief, [Update on Sexual Harassment in the Federal Workplace](#), but the full report could not be released until a quorum was restored at MSPB.

Many of the findings in this report are based on data from the 2016 Merit Principles Survey (MPS 2016), including several key items from past surveys that were repeated to enable making comparisons over time. Several of these related to:

- Federal employee understanding of sexual harassment;
- Prevalence of specific sexual harassment behaviors; and
- Actions taken by those who experienced harassment.

Although the prevalence of sexual harassment as measured by these surveys has decreased, 14.3% of Federal employees (20.9% of women and 8.7% of men) experienced one or more types of sexual harassment behaviors. To examine possible reasons why sexual harassment persists even though the vast majority of employees understand that it is wrong, the survey asked for employees' perceptions regarding important actions taken (or not taken) within their agencies.

Based on these survey findings, input from equal employment opportunity experts, and a review of the relevant literature, this report provides numerous recommendations to guide Federal agency leaders and employees regarding opportunities to prevent and manage sexual harassment. These include interrelated strategies involving policies and practice, education, and accountability. By proactively implementing these approaches, agencies can foster a work environment that is more equitable and inclusive, thereby fostering better outcomes for employees, the organization, and the public that it serves.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is an independent, quasi-judicial agency whose mission is to protect the Merit System Principles and promote an effective Federal workforce free of Prohibited Personnel Practices. MSPB studies are available at www.mspb.gov/studies.